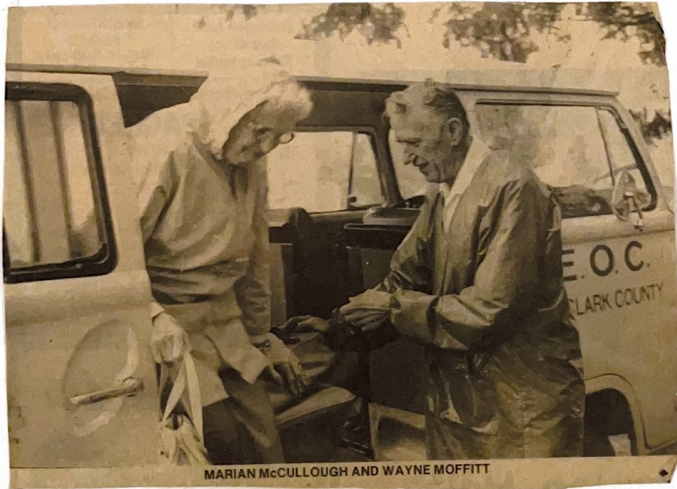




CAMAS HIGH SCHOOL'S first driver's training car was driven by Wayne Moffitt, pictured. The photograph was taken in front of Camas High School in 1948.



MARIAN McCULLOUGH AND WAYNE MOFFITT

Retired teacher gives helping hand to citizens

It's a cold, rainy day in November. The wind is blowing leaves from the apple trees and the birds are huddling in their nests for warmth. Around the slippery roads of Mt. Norway weaves an old Volkswagen bus. The windshield wipers can't keep up with the pelting rain and the driver concentrates on the road ahead of him, aiming to drive his passengers safely to the Grange Hall.

The driver, Wayne Moffitt is past retirement age though his body and spirit give the impression of a younger man. His salt and pepper hair has a leaf in it from passing under a tree, and his clothes are dripping wet. He tells jokes and laughs with the folks riding around with him. They enjoy his bantering; even look forward to it.

Wayne works for a Clark County program, Economic Opportunity Committee. It's his job to pick up senior citizens from their homes and take them to the Washougal Grange. There, Wayne serves up a hot meal which he picks up daily from a nearby restaurant.

After the meal, Wayne washes up the trays, stacks them in the back of the bus, then backtracks over the morning's route, driving people back to their homes. He works at this four times a week. On the fifth, Friday, he changes chauffeur caps and drives senior citizens to the doctor, dentist, or optometrist's office. This is part of a Clark County program called Dial-A-Ride. Sometimes no one needs to make a trip to Vancouver, or locally, so Wayne catches up mowing lawns.

Neighbors and elderly folks keep him busy year-round pruning trees and bushes, or mowing the grass. "They trust me," Wayne said. "If they go away on a trip they just give me the key to their house and depend on me to keep an eye on things for them. It means a lot to me to be trusted."

Wayne has been a part of the Camas-Washougal community for the last 40 years. One of the highlights of his life occurred when he was the band instructor at Camas High School in 1947. His band was the first Out-Of-State high school

band to participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif.

He and 41 students, a nurse, parent, superintendent and high school principal, traveled to Pasadena by train. The Kiwanis Club raised \$5,000 for the event to help pay for expenses. The community was "proud of the youngsters and helped all they could in fund-raising projects. It was quite a feather in his cap to be chosen for the parade as he was the first high school band teacher to come to the school."

Previously, he worked at four other schools in Washington. At each one he started a band and over a period of time had them marching in parades and at sports events wearing spanking new uniforms.

"Music has always been a part of my life," he said. "I came from a musical family. My school had a Glee Club and I would walk 3½ miles to and from the jailhouse in town where we practiced."

During his teaching years at Camas High School Wayne became the first driver training instructor for Camas, Washougal, and Battleground. He gave behind the wheel instruction for eight years. Later, he drove a school bus for 10 years. His excellent driving record awarded him the job as a license examiner for the Washington State Patrol in Seattle.

Wayne had retired from teaching school in 1957, having taught the last four years in Baline, Wa. After taking the job in Seattle, he transferred to Vancouver which brought him closer to his old home in Camas.

Over the next few years he worked as an instructor in a commercial adult driver training school in Vancouver. During that time he was offered the job as chief dispatcher for a bus line and drove a sight-seeing bus for the Yellowstone Park Company. "I was doing such a good job that Mrs. W.M. Nichols, Chairman of the Yellowstone Park Company, offered me a job as her private chauffeur."

"Working for a millionaire proved to be an educational experience for Wayne. "I could tell you lots of

stories about the rich and their ways," he said with a laugh. "You get to know a lot about them when you sit within hearing distance driving them around. You can't help but hear."

"Why, I worked for one lady who had four cooks and three maids in the time I was with her. She was a difficult person to get along with," he said. One of the things he liked to do in his spare time was cut wood for his employers.

"One day I saw that a neighbor's tree was ready to fall into the backyard, so I walked over to the house and knocked on the door. The

butler answered and told me to go ahead and cut it down. So I did. It turned out to be the home of Bing Crosby," he said. "He came over to me when I was working and talked a little while." Later Crosby gave Wayne a signed autographed photograph of himself in appreciation of the work Wayne had done. Mr. Moffitt keeps it in an old

yellowed scrap book along with newspaper clippings and photographs saved over the years.

Wayne and his wife Eleanor celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary earlier this year. They have two sons, Melvin of California, and Raymond of Spokane. Raymond married and is the father of two children.

Wayne attributes his success in life to his wife. "She put up with so many little kids learning to play an instrument, I don't know how she did it," he said. "She took care of the family and spent a lot of time with the boys when I wasn't there."

Wayne has a lot of memories to share and at 75 years of age, he keeps right on making new ones.

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